

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am from Simsbury and a supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I am a scientist working for a dietary supplement company in Cromwell.

I am writing in support of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

It seems that no day passes when we do not hear about an incident involving a gun and someone who lost their temper, or a gun and some form of revenge, or a gun and mental illness. Now the pandemic gives people excuses for using violence to push a point about masks and "rights". I have rights too. I have the right to not worry about my safety and the safety of people I care about.

ERPOs are effective because even though individuals may legally possess guns, they can be dangerous to themselves or others. Background checks are a point-in-time measure that can't detect dangers that family members, friends and co-workers can sense. Individuals considering suicide often give some sign of their intentions. An FBI study of the pre-attack behaviors of active shooters found on average they displayed four to five observable and concerning behaviors that suggested the possibility of violent intentions.

Risk protection laws are demonstrated to reduce firearm suicide. A Duke/Yale/UCONN study reported that for every 10-20 risk protection orders issued under Connecticut's ERPO law, one suicide is prevented.

Another study reported that Indiana's extreme risk laws reduced firearm suicide rates 7.5%.

Allowing family members to petition the court directly, as 12 other states do, provides an alternative means of initiating the process for people who are reluctant to involve law enforcement at the outset, because they fear law enforcement or are concerned about stigmatizing the gun owner as a criminal.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret Haldeman

Simsbury, CT